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ABSTRACT

Designed for braille transcribers and teachers of the visually handicapped, this document consists of two short articles about textbook format braille. The first article describes some recurring print format problems and suggested solutions for dealing with them. Topics include special page numbering systems, the use of tab indexes, the preferred format for transcribing handbooks and expanded glossaries, rules for respelling, and a word about intentional errors on tests. The second article describes the procedure used in training a braillist to make the transition from literary to textbook braille transcription. At the National Library Division of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (Toronto), groups, formed by geographical area, work together successfully. There is no formal instruction program for textbook transcription. (LH)

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TEXTBOOK FORMAT BRAILLE

Print Format Problems

Barbara H. Tate, Chairman

Lately, questions about several print formats have appeared in correspondence from a number of textbook transcribers. The problems raised by these formats are either not covered in the *Code of Braille Textbook Formats and Techniques, 1977*, or they are subject to differing interpretations based on conflicting code provisions. When faced with such problems, it is the first duty of a textbook braillist to provide an accurate transcription of the particular print text, using a consistent and clearly understandable braille format throughout. However, when braillists devise a variety of solutions for the *same* print format problem, braille readers (especially the younger ones) are likely to be confused. Following is a presentation of some recurring print format problems which have been brought to my attention and suggested solutions for dealing with them. Of course, your input of criticisms or further suggestions are welcome.

Special Page Numbering Systems

The text may use, instead of the conventional consecutive page numbering in roman and arabic numerals, a combination of numbers and/or letters. These special page numbering systems particularly are apt to be found in related texts, such as workbooks, exercise

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manuals or test booklets, that are designed to be used as companion volumes along with a classroom textbook.

When the pages of a print text are shown numbered with either a combination of numbers or a combination of numbers and letters, in braille the *consecutive numbers* must be placed at the right margin, regardless of the sequence shown in print. Each page number must be separated by a blank cell from the preceding number, letter or letters used in print. Follow print copy as to the capitalization of letters. Remember that a single letter or a combination of letters which corresponds to an English braille contraction or short-form word must be preceded by the letter sign.

Tab Indexes

The text may refer to them as "locater keys," "quick reference guides" and so forth. They may consist of colored areas placed either at the upper right corner or along the right side of the print page. They may contain combinations of numbers or combinations of abbreviations or letters and numbers. However, unlike the number/letter combinations described above, these do *not* serve to number individual text pages. When such devices serve no other purpose than to provide the print reader with a quick visual reference, they should be omitted from the braille text.

Handbooks or Expanded Glossaries

The format provided for entry words in Appendix D, §1f, as amended by BANA in November 1980, allows for the orderly incorporation of subentries commonly found in glossaries, vocabularies and dictionaries. However, it does *not* take into account the problems posed when a print text includes within the entries such things as: numerous example sentences shown with linear or spatial diagramming; facsimiles of dictionary pages, library cards, addressed envelopes, business and personal letters; numbered and lettered exercise materials.

When confronted with such a print format, the transcriber should not attempt to follow the indention pattern set forth for entries and subentries in Appendix D of the code. Though it cannot be stated as a hard and fast rule, experience has shown that a better braille presentation results when each entry in such material is treated as a minor heading, that is, started in cell 5 with runovers also in cell 5, and preceded but not followed by a blank line. Items within the entries may then be brailled according to their usual spacing and indention requirements.

Respelling

Rule XIX sets forth specific tables of braille symbols and/or rules of usage which are *not* arbitrarily interchangeable between the three print notation systems covered: §43 Simple Respelling, §44 Diacritics, §45 Phonetics and Phonemics. In the examples below, you will note the presence of small caps used to indicate secondary syllable stress and certain diacritic marks.

switchman [SWICH-mən]
Navajo (NAV uh HOE)
Oneida (oh NĪ duh)
Huitzilopochtli (WEE tsee loh POHCH tlee)

Clearly, a satisfactory transcription of such respelled words is not possible under existing code provisions.

If a text indicates pronunciation by means of respelled words that show *no* print stress signs, the format given below is suggested. However, if respelled words contain *any print stress signs,* they must be transcribed according to §44 Diacritics.

1. Follow print copy as to use of enclosure symbols.
2. All respelled words must be written in uncontracted braille, and the contractions for *to, into* and *by* must not precede them.
3. Follow print copy as to the syllabication shown; however, if the text shows blank spaces between syllables, the braille hyphen (dots 3-6) should be substituted for the print space.
4. Respelled words must not be divided at the ends of lines except between syllables.
5. When diacritic marks (other than stress signs) are shown in respelled words, they should be represented by the appropriate braille symbols given in §44a.
6. When the text indicates syllable stress by capital letters, the braille single or double capital sign must precede these letters.
7. Braille italics should be used when the text shows syllable stress by using regular type and any *one* of the following: italics, boldface, small caps, underlining.
8. When primary and secondary syllable stresses are shown by using any *two* of the following: capital letters, italics, boldface, small caps, underlining; in braille use capital letters to represent primary syllable stress and italics to represent secondary syllable stress.
9. Do *not* insert a braille hyphen before a syllable printed in a special typeface, capital letters or underlined unless a blank space or a hyphen is shown in the text.
10. *Only* the termination symbol (dots 6, 3) should be inserted to terminate the effect of braille italics, boldface or capital indicators. If a print hyphen or blank space follows a syllable printed in a special typeface, capital letters or underlined; then the termination symbol must precede the braille hyphen.

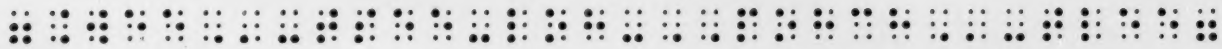
Following are the respelled example words transcribed according to this suggested format.

[SWICH-mən]

(NAV uh HOE)

(oh NĪ duh)

(WEE tsee loh POHCH tlee)



Intentional Errors in Tests

Rule IX, §27 of the official code calls for the use of uncontracted braille for *all words* in the sentence or passage whenever the print text shows intentional errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar. Rule XII, §33 provides that tests should be transcribed in such a way that a minimum of time is spent in reading. Obviously, these two code provisions are in conflict; therefore, when confronted with such a print format the transcriber must examine the material carefully to determine whether or not to use contracted braille. The manner of transcription must not indicate an answer choice or a solution to a problem, but at the same time the student must be assured of normal reading speed.

Transition from Literary to Textbook Braille Transcription

Margaret Craig, The National Library Division of The Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Toronto.

Following certification in Literary braille the transcribers produce novels for the Library under the guidance of their Literary instructor. The instructor proofreads the first volumes and when satisfied with the accuracy of the braille, all further volumes are proofread by one of the Library's qualified proofreaders. At present there are five blind proofreaders on staff. This supervision continues for a period of six months to a year during which time the instructor evaluates the braillist's competency, accuracy and judgment; interest in and commitment to this volunteer service; and productivity.

It is explained that knowledge of the Textbook Code and a year minimum of textbook transcription is necessary for further advancement to specialization in Mathematics and Sciences, Foreign Language, Music and Tactile.

This, again, as in the beginning when the braillist first decided to become a braille transcriber, is a very personal decision and no pressure is exerted on the individual although we do stress our need for textbook braillists.

When the braillist is ready to try textbook transcription the instructor helps the braillist make the transition. A fairly simple textbook is chosen so the braillist can become familiar with the basic format of page numbering, print page indicators, headings and preliminary pages. Because of the large number and variety of textbooks CNIB National Library receives for transcription it is necessary to "tear up" most of them into volumes for several braillists to work on at the same time. This gives the instructor a wide range to choose from and usually a simple, short volume is chosen for the first assignment. The Code of Braille Textbook Formats and Techniques is given to the braillist who is introduced to the Rules as they are required in the volume at hand.

The instructor continues her evaluation. (Unfortunately "her" is correct here as so far we have no "hims" who are certified instructors.) As the braillist progresses, more difficult assignments are given and less pre-formatting is done. Until the braillist achieves skilled status in formatting, it is either done or supervised by an instructor.

In the Toronto area we have been experimenting with small groups of textbook braillists headed by a format leader. Format leaders are experienced braillists but not necessarily instructors. They are chosen for their judgment, leadership ability, enthusiasm and proximity to group, when possible, as these groups are formed by geographical area. Format leaders are responsible for supplying assignments, following progress of work, making sure volumes are complete by the target date, checking format of each completed volume, as well as being available to group members for any assistance thay may require.

This group concept has evolved after many years of various approaches and is still changing. Each group is responsible for its own meeting place and frequency of meetings. The group consists of three to five braillists plus a leader. Larger groups tend to become unwieldy.

These braillists benefit greatly by being part of a group. They enjoy the togetherness in that they are not alone with their problems — and they discover that other braillists do make the same silly mistakes! Group members increase their production and along the way become even better braillists. They learn by hearing each others' problems discussed. At the group meetings the leader may cover the formatting and issuing of a whole book.

The groups do not work in isolation. The format leaders have backup consultants who are very informally referred to as "grandmothers" who in turn consult with one another.

We have found that this system works because we are in a metropolitan area. At present we are working with eight textbook groups. →

The same group concept is used for Mathematics and Sciences, Foreign Language, Tactile and Literary.

An interjection at this point. Our tactile group has flourished in the past year and now includes non-braillists as well as braillists. This group does all tactile required which leaves the transcribers more time for brailling. Production has increased and tactile presentation has improved. This tactile group also works with the Recording Studio producing tactile to supplement the tapes.

The instructors work individually with those braillists who prefer to work alone or for whom it is not convenient to join a group.

The group system has evolved because there is no formal instruction program for textbook transcription. We have been using this method for two to three years and are pleased with the quality of braille, enthusiasm of our transcribers and the improved service to our clients.

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